



Sacavin Courier



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New members gather with the Grand Commandeur in front of the Vintners' Swan.

Our thanks to Martin Hart, David Darlington and Sid Price for the photographs in this issue of the Courier.

Sacavin Jazz Lunch

Tuesday 1st September

A happy group of 55 chevaliers and their guests enjoyed a relaxed lunch at the National Liberal Club preceded by some excellent jazz. We were lucky enough to listen to Max Brittain as guitarist, with drummer Adrian Macintosh and double bass player John Rees-Jones whilst we sipped our Vin d'Honneur and ate canapés in the David Lloyd George Room.

They played several well-known numbers especially chosen for an autumn meeting of wine lovers. These included September in the Rain (well it was 1st September!), Autumn Leaves, I love Paris and the Days of Wine and Roses to name but a few. Our Vin d'Honneur was well in tune – Cremant de Loire Louis Duroc Beauchant. Their music blended with the harmony of the company, creating a convivial atmosphere as the relaxing strains of music flowed through the room

For lunch we dined on escalope de rose veal with mushroom sauce, sauté potatoes and vegetables, followed by summer fruits and a delicious elderflower jelly, then coffee and mints.

Unusually all our luncheon wines came from the same vigneron. Indeed we aim to visit Cheverny on our next trip to the Loire in May 2016. These wines gave us a fine example of the taste of things to come. Domaine de Montcy, AOC Cheverny is an organic vineyard of about 20 hectares of clayey, siliceous and chalky soil, where harvesting is mostly by hand. The wine making is natural, without any artificial additives.

The first white was Cheverny Blanc Domaine de Montcy 2014, which was a blend of 50% Sauvignon and 50% Chardonnay. It had an intense golden colour with a candied nose. In the mouth the wine was well balanced, with mineral aromas, elegant fresh and with a long finish.

Next we enjoyed Cour-Cheverny Blanc Domaine de Montcy This white was made from 100% Romorantin, with a straw yellow colour and deep and complex nose. There were flavours of rhubarb, and in the mouth aromatic lemon tones. The palate was powerful and balanced with great length.

Lastly we drank Cheverny Rouge Louis de la Saussaye 2008, which was 60% Pinot Noir, 15% Gamay and 25% Malbec. It had a sweet scented bouquet with ripe cherry fruits and vibrant spices. In the mouth there were layers of ripe cherry and berry fruits with a long and refined finish.

The Grand Commandeur thanked the musicians for their wonderful playing, and Des Holland in his absence for choosing such an interesting selection of wines. He also thanked Alastair Bellingham for all his hard work, then Sandra and her team at the National Liberal Club for yet another fine lunch. He mentioned that the 2016 Loire excursion to Blois and Cheverny would be a week earlier than previously advised – now starting Monday 9th May. He thanked everyone for coming to the Jazz Lunch.

Kind members of the Savage Club then invited members of Sacavin to join them in their sanctuary below, and several of us enjoyed that privilege together. As usual this topped off a most enjoyable Jazz lunch with the camaraderie of Sacavin tuned to perfection.

Felicity Bellamy



SACAVIN JAZZ LUNCH



Sacavin Jazz in action: Max Brittain,
John Rees-Jones & Adrian Macintosh



Richard & Linda
Edwardson



Elizabeth Lindley & Geoffrey Wheal



Michael Gray & Alan Stratton



Anna McKowen &
Adrian Macintosh



Derek Sheen,
John & Marie Folev

CHAPITRE DES VENDANGES IN ANGERS



Geoffrey Wheal with Grand Maître Pierre Aguilas



Members of the Grand Conseil

The Chapitre des Vendanges in Angers

Saturday 17th October 2015

The 'Chapitre des Vendanges' marks the celebration of a successful grape harvest in the Anjou/Saumur region of the Loire. This is held every October in the magnificent surroundings of the historic Greniers St-Jean in the heart of Angers.

Three representatives of the British Commanderie of Sacavin and their ladies: Geoffrey and Brenda Wheal, Alastair and Julia Bellingham and John and Marie Foley, were very happy to attend this year's Chapitre and to process in their robes with our French colleagues to the silvery sound of their trumpeters.

Our Grand Commandeur, Geoffrey, was invited to process beside the Grand Maitre, Pierre Aguilas, to demonstrate the close links of friendship between the French and British confréries. Geoffrey was also asked to make a speech to the assembly which he did magnificently as he thanked them for the brotherly friendship our French colleagues show us and to wish them a very successful

vintage for 2015. The Chinese delegation (soon to be a new Commanderie of Sacavin) completed a memorable international Chapitre.

After the procession and the induction of many more Chevaliers, we all sat down to the many courses of an excellent meal with delicious wines as well as dancing before wending our way back to our hotels in the early morning.

Long live the Entente between the French and British Sacavins!

John Foley



As John Foley mentions above, there will soon be a new Sacavin Commanderie and this one will be in China. Tom Tao Hsu, a Francophile, accompanied by 9 members of the Yanhui Valley Wine Region north of Beijing, the oldest in China, recently visited Angers where they spent 5 days learning about the vineyards of Anjou-Saumur.

Tom Tao Hsu is not only the owner of four vineyard properties but also CEO of the Chinese smartphone HTC brand. He has been passionate about France for several years. "In 1999," he says, "together with Jacques Chirac, I planted 33 hectares of French vines in the province of Hebei. Today this Franco-Chinese domaine is part of my Canaan vineyard."

Tom Tao Hsu was inducted into the Sacavin at this October's Chapitre des Vendanges and will be the Chinese Commanderie's first Commandeur.



Laure Pertus, Grand Chancelier of the Confrérie, explained as she greeted the Chinese delegation at the Chapitre. "Our aim is to make our wines better known beyond our own region of Anjou-Saumur. We started a Commanderie in Great Britain and then in Canada and now it's going to happen as well in China".

"It's rare to welcome not only the owner but at the same time so many Chinese vintners,"

We wish our new Chinese confrères many years of vinous enjoyment.

Chapitre Princesse Charlotte

Wednesday 18th November

The Vintners Hall proved yet again to be a splendid setting for 67 Sacavin chevaliers and guests to enjoy a fine dinner. We were honoured that 3 of our confrères from Angers had travelled from France to be with us, despite the recent tragedy in Paris. They were Laure Pertus, Veronique Jerosme and Joseph Mabbit. The Grand Commandeur began the evening with a minute's silence to show our solidarity with France at this time.

To the fine trumpet fanfare proceedings began with the induction of five new chevaliers. David Smith is a chartered electrical engineer from Bishops Stortford, and indeed the youngest ever mayor of that town 39 years ago! He is involved in many charitable activities including Probus, the Talking Newspaper and governor of a local school. He is a past Master of the Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers, and also sings tenor with the local choral society. Perhaps he could improve on our rendition of Optime! He enjoys his family, good food and good wine.

Maureen Smith (David's wife) is a retired pre-school officer who has been married to David for over 50 years. She was mistress of the Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers, and past president of Bishop Stortford Inner Wheel, and on the committee of the town twinning association. Her interests include family, RHS, travel and of course good food and wine. She sings first soprano in the choral society so will undoubtedly be an asset when we sing Optime!

Richard Edwardson has long been a wine lover and hails from Wivenhoe. He worked at a private bank in London and then Credit Lyonnais. After that he ran an excellent shop in Wivenhoe for 20 years which sold good wines amongst other things. One of the wines he supplied was Muscadet so he definitely merits being one of us! He is well known for his rendition of Falstaff at the local panto.

Alan Stratton comes from Hampton, Middlesex, in a house where not much alcohol

was consumed. He soon made up for that by trying the likes of Liebfraumilch and Blue Nun! Luckily his tastes are far more refined now! He enjoys both red and white wine, with sauvignon being a particular favorite. He is very keen to learn more about Loire wines. His early career was in commercial business and then administration for a charity. He also ran a delicatessen and off licence with his wife selling mainly French and Italian wines. He is a keen member of the Savage Club, and enjoys eating out, opera and art.

Vanessa Stratton (Alan's wife) hails from London and her father ran an off licence. She did not enjoy wines until her late twenties, starting out with Mateus Rose then German wines. Her favourite wine is Sancerre. She has developed a very keen palate and is often able to identify different wines, country of origin and even regions. She was a legal secretary, and has three children. Vanessa enjoys eating out, opera and ballet



The trumpeters played from the minstrels' gallery as the Grand Commandeur led the new chevaliers in for dinner. We dined royally

with excellent wines chosen by Des Holland to accompany the feast.

MENU

Vin d'honneur

*Brut Blanc de Blancs, Bouvet-Ladubay
Méthode Traditionnelle 100% Chenin Blanc*

Menu

*PORTLAND CRAB & LANGOUSTINE SALAD,
with samphire and shellfish dressing*

~*~

*'le Chapitre, Pinot Gris, Val de Loire 2014'
100% Pinot Gris. 12.5% abv.*

~*~

*AGED FILLET OF BEEF
with potato & herb terrine, blue cheese fritters,
seasonal greens and carrots and red wine jus*

~*~

*Chinon from Wilfrid Rousse organic wine cuvée 'les Galuches'
100% Cabernet Franc*

~*~

CHEESE BOARD

*Brie de Meaux, Bleu d'Auvergne & Sainte-Maure Caprifeuille
served with quince jelly, celery, grapes and biscuits*

~*~

APPLE UPSIDE DOWN CAKE

~*~

*Coteaux du Layon, Domaine des Sablonnettes, Fleurs d'érables
100% Chenin Blanc*

~*~

COFFEE & CHOCOLATES

~*~

Choice of Cointreau or Dalmore 15-year old Single Malt

it next year when we hope to join you for dinner in Touraine, the garden of France”.

Next, Grand Commandeur Geoffrey Wheal welcomed us and the new chevaliers to Sacavin. He also welcomed our special French friends. Firstly Laure Pertus, the Deputy Grand Maitre who we know, like and respect, and we treat as a good friend. Next Veronique Jerosme, on her first visit, which we hope will be the first of many. Then Jose Mabit who used to be secretary of the French Confrérie. He and his wife Maryvonne are old friends whose company we enjoy. Sadly Michel Leterme was unable to attend for health reasons but sent his good wishes. He and Monique were sorely missed. Laure is currently the Délégué Angevin along with Laurent Polleau.



After the loyal toast, Laure Pertus spoke to us saying she was happy to represent the French Sacavin chevaliers. Many would have loved to have come, but were busy with their wine presses! “The 2015 harvest promises to be exceptional”, she said, “So do come and taste

The Grand Commandeur gave a résumé of 2015, including Wine Challenge 8 comparing Loire wines with those from the New World. Then the AGM at Queens Club. Next a very successful visit to Somerset seeing English vineyards, and a local cheddar dairy whilst battling with some inclement weather. The trip was expertly organized by Richard Ridler. In September we enjoyed an excellent jazz lunch at the National Liberal Club, with fine music played by three of our members, Adrian Mackintosh, Max Brittain and John Rees Jones. These three are also members of the Savage Club and the friendship between Sacavin and Savage is developing happily.

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In October a party of six, the Grand Commandeur, Alastair Bellingham and John Foley, along with their wives, attended the Chapitre des Vendanges in Angers. Geoffrey and Brenda also lunched with Veronique Jerosme and her husband at their magnificently restored chateau. The luncheon was in honour of a Chinese delegation, who may soon be setting up a Chinese Confrérie!

Geoffrey mentioned forthcoming events. "In the future we hope to hold Wine Challenge 9 depending on the restoration to full health of our Chef de Cuisine Des Holland. Our French trip in May, is being meticulously organized by John and Marie Foley".

He then went on to welcome our new chevaliers Richard, Alan, Vanessa and David and looked forward to getting to know them all in the true Sacavin style, which offers a unique brand of friendship and fellowship.

He thanked Steve Marcham for the fine occasion we had enjoyed at Vintners Hall. The Grand Commandeur then wished us Happy Christmas.

Richard Edwardson gave the response on behalf of the new chevaliers, and said the fact that it was a pleasure to do so was a huge understatement. It was a privilege to join Sacavin for its good wine and food, and above all companionship of fun-loving people. "My toast," he said, "is 'Joie de Vivre' which personifies Sacavin".

With that our wonderful evening concluded and I am sure the sense of Sacavin joie de vivre will remain long in our memories as a happy occasion.

Felicity Bellamy



## Anjou Snippets

We are indebted to Délégué Angevin, Michel Leterme, for supplying the occasional cutting from the French press, where the content relates to our interest in Anjou wine. We highlight two here. The first, from *Courier de l'Ouest*, concerns Savennières. While the name is well known to many of us, the minutiae of the article will be of interest to those seeking the best of Anjou's wines.

There are three Appellation d'origine contrôlées (AOCs) for Savennières wine: Savennières, covering most of the vineyards, and the enclaves Savennières-Roche-aux-Moines and Savennières-Coulée-de-Serrant. The top enclave of Savennières, Coulée de Serrant, consists of a single estate run by the Joly family. It is quite rare for only one winery to produce all the wine from an area entitled to a certain name (classified as "Monopole" in French) and it is labelled *Clos de la Coulée de Serrant*.

The article headlines a remarkable fact: The Coulée de Serrant plot has just been harvested for the 885th time! It's a wine that everyone

talks about but how many actually drink it? In truth, it's beyond most people's budget and of the 20,000 bottles produced each year, 70% go abroad.

"Our door is always open, yet people are afraid to come in," complains Virginia Joly, the young patroness of the domain. "It should be simple, we only make wine!"

Like the Romanée-Conti Estate (1.8 per hectare in Burgundy) or Chateau Grillet (3 hectares in the Cotes du Rhone), La Coulée de Serrant (7 hectares) is one of the few French AOC to be held by a single producer.



## CHAPITRE PRINCESSE CHARLOTTE



Tony Moore with Geoffrey Wheal



Trevor Harris,  
Diana Whitcutt,  
Margaret Harris  
& Mark Berger



Jane Berger bearing  
the portrait of our  
patron, Francois  
Rabelais



Veronique Jerosme, Geoffrey Wheal & Laure Partus



Anne Moore &  
Graham Macfarlane



David Smith signs the Golden Book



Gillian Ridler,  
Michael Gray & Valerie Hart



Anna McKowen & Ray Lindley



John Foley, Joseph Mabit, John Ingram & Veronique Jerosme



Planted in the twelfth century (1130) by the Cistercian monks, La Coulée de Serrant has remained a vineyard ever since. The year 2015 is therefore the 885th consecutive vintage. Located on very steep hillsides overlooking the Loire, its Chenin Blanc vines are, on average, more than 40 years old.

The average yield is 20/25 hectolitres per hectare (40 allowed). The grape harvest is by hand, conducted five times over three weeks. In the 1930s, the famous and feared Gastronomic Critic, Curnonsky, classed La Coulée de Serrant among the five greatest white wines of the world, alongside Chateau Yquem (Sauternes), Montrachet (Burgundy), Chateau Grillet (Rhône valley) and Chateau Chalon (Jura).

At Savennières, Domaine Joly produces two other wines: the Clos de la Bergerie in AOC Savennières Roche aux Moines and Les Vieux Clos in AOC Savennières. No doubt our Chef des Expéditions, for future consideration, already has Domaine Joly in his "Little Black Book"!

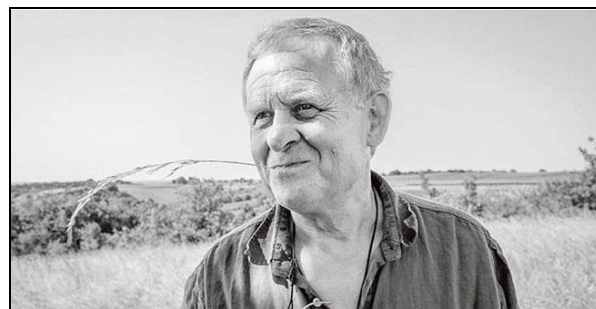


Michel's second cutting is from Le Figaro and, rather than a wine area, its focus is a grape, Chenin Blanc, a variety greatly admired by our own Chef de Cuisine for its amazing versatility.

In the article, Patrick Baudouin, Président du Syndicat Anjou Blanc, who produces both sweet and dry wines at Chaudefonds-sur-Layon, talks about his fondness and also his concerns for the Chenin grape.

He explains that white grape varieties adapt themselves very well to the Loire's northern climate, helping to get freshness and length in the wines. Unfortunately, the area planted with Chenin Blanc has halved since the 1950s, and the dry white appellation now accounts for only 5% of the area of Anjou-Saumur. Half the production of Anjou is rosé.

When Patrick started selling his dry white in the early 2000s, people were amazed to learn that Anjou had anything other than rosé. His concern is that, if nothing is done, Chenin will become negligible.



*Patrick Baudouin, Président du Syndicat Anjou Blanc*

He believes the business model is out of date. In the 1920s, there was an attempt to find one adapted to a market that was favourable to sweet wines. Sugar was rare and expensive and considered a luxury product. Then tastes changed and industrialization caused it to lose its prestige. Producers started Chaptalization (adding sugar to the wine), which decreased the quality and tarnished the image of the great sweet botrytis.

As for rosé, the increase in production, in turn, resulted from a desire after the First World War to plant varieties to make red wine. These served ultimately to make rosé, more suited to Angevin slate soils.

Looking to the future, there is a general discussion about Chenin Blanc. While it is possible to make great sweet wines, it is not possible to do this every year. Botrytis is both the worst and the best of things; depending on the vintage and markets, if mistakes are made, disaster follows.

So the approach being considered for the white wines of Anjou would be to create a Cru, including an appellation to embrace dry Chenins emulating the sweet wines of Chaume and Quarts-de-Chaume. These wines attest the potential of great dry whites and would lay the foundations for a viable economic model to make them more widely available. Chenin is very adaptable in terms of

terroir and vintage, a blank page. Those who work with it, at present, are limited in their achievement. This is a polymorphic grape variety: it can make wines of many different

kinds, few varieties have this capability. This versatility is an asset.



## Sacavin Christmas Diet

With Christmas approaching, we can expect all the usual dire warnings about lifestyle and diet that traditionally occupy the media at this time. For Sacavins, dedicated to the innocent enjoyment of good food and wine, this can be extremely depressing. So we asked the eminent Japanese nutritionist, Professor Watae Takemiki a few searching questions.

**Q: Professor, I've heard that cardiovascular exercise can prolong life. Is this true?**

A: Heart only good for so many beats, and that it.... Don't waste on exercise. Everything wear out eventually. Speeding up heart not make you live longer, it like saying you extend life of car by driving faster. Want to live longer? Take nap.

**Q: Should I reduce my alcohol intake?**

A: Oh no. Wine made from fruit. Fruit very good. Brandy distilled wine, that mean they take water out of fruity bit so you get even more of goodness that way. Beer also made of grain. Grain good too. Bottom up!

**Q: How can I calculate my body/fat ratio?**

A: Well, if you have body and you have fat, your ratio one to one. If you have two body, your ratio two to one.

**Q: What are some of the advantages of participating in a regular exercise programme?**

A: Can't think of one, sorry. My philosophy: No pain....good!

**Q: Aren't fried foods bad for you?**

A: YOU NOT LISTENING! Food fried in vegetable oil. How getting more vegetable be bad?

**Q: Will sit-ups prevent me from getting a little soft around the middle?**

A: Oh no! When you exercise muscle, it get bigger. You should only be doing sit-up if you want bigger stomach.

**Q: Is chocolate bad for me?**

A: You crazy!!? HEL-LO-O!! Cocoa bean! Another vegetable! It best feel-good food around!

**Q: Is swimming good for your figure?**

A: If swimming good for figure, explain whale to me.

**Q: Is getting in shape important for my lifestyle?**

A: Hey! 'Round' is shape!

Well.....that should clear up any misconceptions we may have about food and diets. As we enter the festive season, remember:

Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways – Chardonnay in one hand – chocolate in the other – body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming “WOO-HOO, what a ride!!”



*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year  
from the Management Committee!*



[illegible]

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



Management Committee meeting **Wednesday 16 December 2015**  
The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Management Committee meeting **Wednesday 20 January 2016**  
The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Sacavin Challenge No. 9 **Friday 12 February 2016**  
Wine tasting over Dinner at the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place  
*Calling letters to be dispatched end December*



Spring Lunch & AGM at Queens Club **provisionally booked for Saturday 16 April 2016**  
**N.B. This date may change** and depends on completion of the club's renovations  
*Calling letters to be dispatched first week of March*



Visit to the Touraine **Monday 9 to Saturday 14 May 2016**  
*Calling letters were dispatched first week of November*

